



THE
RURAL DISTRICT OF ELY

ANNUAL

REPORT

for the year

1949

by

K. S. MAURICE - SMITH

M. R. C. S., L. R. C. P.

Medical Officer of Health

R U R A L D I S T R I C T C O U N C I L O F E L Y

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1949

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1949.

1. STATISTICS:

During 1949 the usual statistics have been kept and are available. These are not included in my report according to instructions.

2. GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES:

(a) Ambulances.— Two ambulances are stationed in Ely, both being operated by the Isle of Ely County Council. One is for infectious diseases and the other for non-infectious diseases.

The St. John Ambulance at Littleport has also been available throughout the year. This ambulance works under an agency agreement with the County Council. Members of the Littleport Ambulance and Nursing Divisions man and drive this vehicle. Their efforts are very much appreciated in the District, and their record is a splendid one.

(b) Nursing and Clinic Arrangements.— These are the same as for previous years. The District Nurses continue to maintain their fine record of service.

(c) Isolation Hospital.— The Isolation Hospital is under the control of the Regional Hospital Board. The District owes much to the Matron, Miss A. Pickersgill, S.R.N., and her Staff, who are untiring in their efforts to maintain an efficient, happy hospital.

3. WATER:

(a) The supply for the District is drawn from two chalk wells at West Row. Water supplies of sufficient quantity and sufficient quality have been maintained during the twelve months under review by the Water Engineer and his Staff.

3. WATER (Contd).

I must remind the Council that there is a faulty section of rising main of about 300 yards length at Soham, due to soil erosion. This will probably require attention in the not too far distant future.

During the year Byelaws were made under Section 17 of the Water Act, 1945, for preventing waste, undue consumption, misuse or contamination of water.

(b) (i) The Chloramine Plant has been in use continually and has proved satisfactory. The chloramine process permits of the treatment of the water at the source.

(ii) Four chemical and bacteriological examinations were made during the year, and proved satisfactory.

(iii) No contamination was found during the year.

(iv) The water has no plumbo-solvent action.

(v) The following table shews the percentage of houses in each parish which are supplied respectively with water either direct, or by stand-pipe :

<u>Houses Supplied:</u>							
Coveney	-	164	direct	-	5	stand-pipe	
Downham	-	570	"	-	36	"	"
Haddenham	-	519	"	-	35	"	"
Littleport	-	1675	"	-	39	"	"
Mepal	-	121	"	-	12	"	"
Stretham	-	361	"	-	10	"	"
Sutton	-	457	"	-	20	"	"
Thetford	-	77	"	-	7	"	"
Wentworth	-	36	"	-	1	"	"
Wilburton	-	191	"	-	8	"	"
Witcham	-	120	"	-	4	"	"
Witchford	-	201	"	-	10	"	"
		<u>4492</u>			<u>187</u>		

As will be seen from these figures, the whole of the population is supplied either directly or indirectly with water.

The figures given for houses supplied by means of stand-pipes are difficult to assess with complete accuracy; however, the picture given reflects the position reasonably accurately.



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4. SEWAGE:

- (i) Littleport: Progress has been made - unfortunately not as rapidly as could have been wished - in the laying of the sewers in this village.
- (ii) Sutton & Witcham: With reference to the combined scheme for these two villages, provisional approval for grant has been given by the Ministry of Health, and negotiations have been opened for the acquisition of Mepal Airfield Disposal Works for incorporation in the scheme.
- (iii) Generally speaking there is much planning and work to be done on sewers and sewage disposal in the District. The Council have, however, prepared outline plans for all parishes, but these proposals have been deferred by the Ministry of Health owing to the need for national economy.

5. HOUSING:

- (a) The Council has during the year maintained its lead in the Isle in post-war housing.

78 houses have been completed; Grand total = 287. On the 31st December, 1949, there were 66 houses under construction.
- (b) Permanent housing by re-letting has been provided for 30 families.
- (c) Demolition Orders have been made for eight properties. This has enabled the Council to get control of property in a very bad state of repair, thereby preventing further letting.
- (d) The Council's Policy of issuing Demolition Orders whenever possible, having due regard to the housing shortage, is I am sure a sound policy. There are still a lot of old buildings in the District which should be dealt with, but which cannot be touched until the building programme is a good deal further advanced than it is at present.
- (e) The Housing Act, 1949, has come into force which has strengthened the Council's hands in a number of important directions.

6. SCHOOLS:

Schools as a whole, in the Rural District are in urgent need of attention. It is to be hoped that the coming year will see this problem dealt with adequately by the responsible Authorities. It is quite useless for me to complete a long list of items requiring attention. I am weary of constantly remarking year after year on an unchanged state of affairs. The whole position requires early, earnest and careful consideration.

7. MILK SUPPLY:

(a) Food & Drugs (Milk & Dairies) Act, 1944.— On the 1st October, 1949, the Food and Drugs (Milk & Dairies) Act, 1944 (Appointed Day) Order, 1949, came into effect, transferring the control of milk-production, cowsheds, registration of cow-keepers and dairy-farms, from local authorities to the Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries.

(b) Milk (Special Designations) Act, 1949.— Here is a further step to ensure that milk supplied for consumption conforms to the highest standards of purity, and limits the sale of milk by retail in areas to be specified by orders of the Minister of Food to those classes of milk which qualify for and are sold under "special designations" (i.e. "T.T." "Pasteurised" "Sterilized" "Accredited.")

New Milk & Dairies and Special Designation Regulations are made completing the milk-supply code of the Food & Drugs Acts 1938 to 1949 and making renewed provision as to the registration by the district council of milk dealer and dealers' premises the issue of "special designation" licences to dealers, and the powers of District Medical Officers of Health as respects infected, and infection of, milk (being powers not transferred by the Acts).

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

(a) 275 notifications of infectious diseases were received, including 182 cases of measles. These cases were mostly mild in character with a minimum of complications.

I am still of the opinion that in epidemics of this character early closure of the schools results in a diminution of the incidence of the disease.

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASES (Contd).

The total of 275 is made up as follows :

Infective Hepatitis	13
Whooping Cough	48
Measles	182
Scarlet Fever	13
Erysipelas	4
Diphtheria	1
Pneumonia	10
Dysentery	3
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1

Total 275

(b) Disinfection of premises, etc., is regularly carried out in cases of notifiable disease; also when infection is reported, or requests are received for any special reasons. Clothing and bedding are disinfected at the Isolation Hospital, by arrangement with the East Anglian Hospital Board.

(c) Tuberculosis: 14 New Cases were notified during the year. After making the necessary adjustment, there are now the following numbers on the Register :

Respiratory:

Male 25
Female 20

Non-respiratory:

8
11.

Compared with 1948, the figures shew a decrease of 4 cases.

9. FOOD:

Periodic and regular inspections of shops, etc., etc., are carried out by the Sanitary Inspector. Where indicated necessary action is taken by the Sanitary Inspector and myself.

More assistance is required in the Sanitary Inspector's Department which will allow of closer supervision being carried out.

Slaughter-house and carcase inspections are carried out by the Meat Inspector - Mr. J. Runciman, M.R.C.V.S.

10. FACTORIES ACT:

Such factories as are in the District are inspected periodically and any necessary action is taken.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

K. S. MAURICE-SMITH

Medical Officer of Health,
Ely Rural District Council.

